



A Day in the Life of a Greenkeeper

Our Head Greenkeeper, Peter Hay, shares with you how his days play out on a regular basis.

Early starts are part of everyday life, so I'm up at 4.50 am to get to the golf club for around 5.45 am. I've usually checked the weather the night before to see if we need to rework the day's tasks.

Once at the golf club I will check the weather again because everything works around the this. I also check the BRS system to see the day's play and if there are any competitions on or societies booked in so I can relay this to the rest of the staff so we can try and minimise disruption to play. The staff will be given their tasks and then head out onto the course. I will usually have a chat with Liam my deputy about the day or anything in the week that needs discussing. Today we were sorrel rolling and brushing the greens. Then we cut them and followed up with a light top dressing which was then brushed in. We try to get this done early to keep in front of members playing. The irrigation system is then set up to water the top dressing overnight.

I then spoke to Paul from Aiktens who does the soil samples for the greens. This was to order some Quadrop, which is injected into the irrigation tank to make the water as close to natural rainfall as possible. We usually discuss the greens and plant health and the on-going programme for the year when we speak, the programme having been put together using the results from the soil samples taken by Paul. A surfactant wetting agent was the next application to be applied to the greens, this is done throughout the playing season. This was done the day after the top-dressing application, again the weather has to be right for spraying or it can't be done.

I then had a meeting with Andy, Head of Course, to discuss the works that are ongoing. Firstly, an update on the new borehole that is being fitted at the moment and getting the water tested when it is up and running followed by anything of concern on the course at the moment such as lack of rain! We also made him aware that if the dry weather continues, we may need to stop cutting to protect some areas of the course and start to use the fairway walker to water some of the dryer fairways. We will then discuss further works for any upcoming events in the club calendar and work that needs to be planned further down the



line into the Autumn/Winter months so that we can plan to the best of our abilities so long as the weather plays ball.

The next morning is the same routine before we go out to set the course up for the day's medal, holes are changed, greens cut, bunkers are raked and the tees were cut on that morning as well. Cutting then continues throughout the day and hopefully goes smoothly with no breakdowns. I then get a phone call from Liam who was checking the irrigation to tell me we have some sprinklers not working properly on a couple of greens. We try and repair most irrigation faults ourselves so, on this occasion one of the sprinklers on the 7th green was not rotating properly. Fortunately, we have a lot of spare Toro sprinklers which were kindly given to the club from another course after they had a new system put in. This makes life a lot easier to keep on top of most sprinkler problems and is an easy fix. We are always checking the greens for any signs of disease to the plant at this time of year as there can be a good chance of seeing some especially with the irrigation being on most nights, if the lads notice any disease they are great at relaying it back to myself or Liam so it can be addressed. At the moment there are no signs of any disease on any of the greens.

Thursday is generally a quiet day with members and we can crack on with the fairways and the rough. These two jobs usually take the most amount of time to complete in the week, especially once we start cutting fairways twice a week. Jack rang me to tell me the little rough mower wouldn't start and was stuck up on the 5th hole near the tee, after checking all the safety switches were working properly and not stuck on, I went through some other things looking for a fault and found a wire had come off the starter motor. So once that was repaired it was back up and running. Fortunately, the rest of the day ran smoothly!

Friday is here again so the bunkers are raked again, greens cut, tees cut together with any fairways that need a second cut before the weekend. The rough will usually have been finished the day before or possibly a little bit left to do on Friday. Approaches will have been cut on Thursday with the same mower used to cut tees. Once the greens have been cut, the mower will then be checked and set up ready for the weekend's cutting. The irrigation will be set up if needed over the weekend too. Whoever is working the weekend will be told of any competitions that are on over the weekend so the course can be set up both days.

Peter's account of his days will help us all to understand how Peter and his Greens Team work hard to keep our course in great condition with minimum disruption to our game of golf. Thanks Peter and Team you are doing a great job with many compliments from members and visitors this season!